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## News Release

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U.S. Geological Survey

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## Dino Digging at the USGS

"A dead thing in rock," and "when a leaf falls on a rock," were just two of the lively responses campers at Science Camp 2000 gave to Mike Brinker, information specialist and geologist supporting the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), when he asked, "what is a fossil?" This question was raised numerous times during Dino Digging, the second session of the highly successful science camp developed by the USGS and the Reston Association. Four two-week sessions are offered for children ages 8-12.

During Brinker's interactive "Fossil Exploration" hands-on discussion, the campers learned how fossils are formed, how to determine the height of a dinosaur by measuring its stride and how to make a fossil mold using a cookie dough-like mixture.

Jean Self-Trail, USGS geologist and micropaleontologist, introduced key fossils to the campers and challenged them to determine how trace fossils were formed.

During one of two field trips the campers followed Riverbend Park's Paw Paw 1 1/4-mile nature trail, which winds through several wild-life habitats down to the Potomac River. They were greeted by George Rogers Clark, the red-tailed hawk, and skimmed stones across an algae-covered pond. Many of the science campers also traveled to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History where they discovered a "Jurassic Park" with an Allosaurus poised to strike. Next they wandered through the fascinating Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals.

Other educational activities during the Dino Digging session included working in the science lab to make fossilized handprints and footprints using plaster of Paris, and going in the computer lab to look at Internet Web sites about dinosaurs. The children also swam at area pools, made gimp necklaces and keychains, worked on a camp newspaper and boated on Lake Anne.

Future Science Camp 2000 sessions include Going for the Gold and Imagine That. For more information on the Reston Association Science Camps, please contact the Reston Association Registrar's office at 703-435-6551.

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As the nation's largest water, earth and biological science and civilian mapping agency, the USGS works in cooperation with more than 2,000 organizations across the country to provide reliable, impartial scientific information to resource managers, planners, and other customers. This information is gathered in every state by USGS scientists to minimize the loss of life and property from natural disasters, to contribute to the conservation and the sound economic and physical development of the nation's natural resources, and to enhance the quality of life by monitoring water, biological, energy, and mineral resources.

\*\*\*USGS\*\*\*

(Note to Reporters/Editors: If interested in obtaining digital photographs of the activities mentioned in this news release, please contact Cheryl O'Brien at 703-648-5929 with your e-mail address.)